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Jonas Hapgood Brooks

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Joseph H. Brooks

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JONAS HAPGOOD BROOKS.

THE ancestry of Mr. Brooks's family is traced to Capt. (1) Thomas Brooke, who came from England and settled at Watertown, Mass., in 1630-31, at the time of the formation of the Massachusetts Bay colony under Governor Winthrop. He was admitted freeman December 7, 1636, and about the same time he became one of the founders of Concord, Mass. He was a captain in the local militia, constable 1638, appointed 1640 under law to value property at Concord, a representative or deputy to the General Court at Boston eight years, between 1644 and 1662, and commissioner under authority of this court to regulate the liquor trade among the Indians. He owned a large tract of land in Concord, and at one time controlled the fur trade among the Indians, by purchase of grant from the court, in the Concord district. In 1660 he purchased, with his son-in law, Timothy Wheeler, 400 acres of land in Medford for £404 sterling, and the most of this tract has been continuously owned by his descendants in the Brooks name. Capt. Thomas Brooke (this style of spelling is found in the King's Court records at Boston) died in Concord, May 21, 1667. He was married in England (where two if not three of his children were born) to Grace ———, who died May 2, 1664. They had at least four sons—Joshua, Caleb, Gershom, and Thomas, jr.—and one daughter, Mary, who married Timothy Wheeler. These sons originally spelled the name Brookes, but by mutual agreement in 1680 dropped the "e." and ever since the present style, Brooks, has uniformly prevailed. (2) Joshua Brookes (later Brooks), a tanner and a resident of what is now Lincoln (then Concord), Mass., was probably born in England, and on the 17th of the 8th mo. (October), 1653, was married to Hannah Mason, of Watertown, daughter of Hugh Mason, a tanner, deputy to the General Court and a commissioner against the Dutch in 1664. Joshua was admitted freeman May 26, 1653, was a deacon in the church for many years, and died prior to April 16, 1697. He had eleven children, of whom (3) Daniel Brooks, the fourth, born November 15, 1663, married Ann Meriam August 9, 1692, and died October 18, 1733, at Concord, where his tombstone is still standing. She died January 24, 1757. Daniel was an ensign in the militia, and a prominent man, selectman 1716 to 1719, 1725 to 1729, and a large landowner in Concord and Lincoln. He had eleven children, of whom the sixth, (4) John Brooks, born February 12, 1702, married, January, 1728, Lydia Barker, daughter of John and Elizabeth Barker of Concord, Mass., born June 18, 1711; he died March 6, 1777, she died June 3, 1802, aged ninety-one; both are buried in Woodlawn Cemetery (tombstone) at Acton (a part of old Concord), Mass. John was for many years a deacon in the church at Acton and a selectman of the town, and assessor several years. December 21, 1772,

he was on a committee from his town to consider the state of the rights of the colonists and the violation of said rights and report a draft of such votes as they shall think proper, and was a cousin of Col. Eleazer Brooks, who commanded the minute-men at the North Bridge at Concord, April 19, 1775, and ordered them to fire on the British. He also had eleven children, of whom (5) Charles Brooks, the third, born at Concord April 6, 1732, lived, after his marriage, in Marlboro until 1764, and then purchased lands and moved to Princeton, Mass., where he died in March, 1798. In 1757 he was a member of Lieutenant Maynard's Company of Marlboro, and was at Fort William Henry when it was captured by Montcalm, being one of the 700 out of the 2,500 American troops who escaped the massacre that followed by Montcalm's Indians. In 1773 he was one of a Committee, appointed by the town (Princeton), of Correspondence "to reply to a letter from the Selectmen of the Town of Boston, showing infringement upon and violation of our Rights and Liberties (by the mother country)." On April 20, 1775, he marched as a member of minute-men in Capt. Joseph Sargent's Company, Colonel Sparhawk's regiment, to Cambridge, in response to the Lexington-Concord alarm of April 19; in service sixteen days. June 2, 1775, was chosen ensign of Alarm Company. 1777, one of a committee (town of Princeton) "to make an average of the money and services of the present war." 1778, treasurer of the town. 1779, on committee of three "to borrow the money to pay the men which may be engaged for the Army." 1779, September 9, on standing committee "to procure money from time to time to pay men which shall be called for the defence of their country." The town records also show the following:

"To Enoch Brooks, Treasurer, You are hereby required to pay to Capt. John Mirick, Lt. Charles Brooks and Josiah Davis, a committee appointed by the Town to procure money to pay the soldiers as encouragement for to enter into the Continental or State servis, the sum of Eleven thousand three hundred and forty four pounds.

"BENJ. HOLDEN,
"SADEY MASON,
"PAUL MATTHEWS,
Selectmen."

"July 1, 1780.

"For value received, I the subscriber, promise to pay the sum of eleven hundred pounds, in the present currency, to be paid in three months, for a hors for the Continental servis, and if not paid then to be on interest till paid, as witness my hand.

CHARLES BROOKS.

"Princeton, July 13, 1780."

September 11, 1780, on treasurer's account, "Lt. Charles Brooks, one day procuring horses for the Continental army;" again in 1783 for same services. He took an active part in raising men and supplies to carry on the Revolutionary war and was one of the most loyal supporters of the colonies. November 24, 1757, he married Mary Hapgood (born June 4, 1740, died August 16, 1808), daughter of John and Abigail (Morse) Hapgood, of Marlboro. They, too, had eleven children, of whom the fifth, (6) Jonas Brooks, born in Princeton December 16, 1770, died there October 7, 1865, was a builder, contractor and farmer. Jonas was active in public affairs, was for many years a justice of the peace, settled as administrator a large number of estates, and was especially noted for his great physical endurance and strength. With his brother John H. he was arrested for debt in refusing to pay the town tax for the support of the State church, as was customary in those days. He successfully defended his position in the courts, and since then no tax has been levied for church purposes in the towns of Massachusetts. At this time

he belonged to the Congregational Society. Afterward he and his brother and two other men organized and built the M. E. church there and continued in its support until his death. He married, first, October 30, 1794, Lydia, daughter of Aaron Temple of Boylston, who was born February 6, 1775, and died October 29, 1819. In May, 1822, he married second, Nancy, daughter of Samuel Davis of Oakham, Mass., who died September 14, 1868, aged eighty-six. Of his ten children (7) Moses Brooks, the seventh, was born in Princeton, Mass., July 19, 1808, and married, January 19, 1832, Sophronia, daughter of Ethan Greenwood, of Hubbardston, Mass., who was born June 18, 1810. In the southern part of Princeton, the town of his birth, is a station called Brooks (named after the family) on the Boston, Barre and Gardner railroad, now a part of the Boston and Maine system, the depot being the old homestead built by Jonas Brooks in 1810 or '11. In 1835 Moses Brooks moved to Rutland, Mass., but in 1851 returned to the parental home in Princeton, and in 1856 came to Oxford, Chenango county, N. Y. In 1862 he settled in the town of Unadilla, near Rockdale, N. Y., where his wife died December 7, 1889, and where his death occurred November 12, 1893. Their children were Charles Aaron, born March 11, 1833, died August 18, 1835; Jonas, born March 9, 1835, died January 10, 1843; Edward, born May 19, 1837, was graduated from the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia in 1862, entered the U. S. army as assistant surgeon the same year, and died in the service April 19, 1866; Sarah Sophronia, born November 4, 1839, married December 30, 1867, Edwin R. Barnes of Norwich, N. Y., and died February 1, 1877, leaving two children, Lenora Sarah, since deceased, and Charles Edward, of Norwich; Moses Walter, a practicing physician of Sidney, N. Y., born November 4, 1841, married Abigail Peet, of Hunter, N. Y., and was graduated from the medical department of the University of Vermont at Burlington in 1879; Jonas Hapgood, the subject of this sketch; and Charles Greenwood, of Mount Upton, N. Y., born December 23, 1849.

Jonas Hapgood Brooks, the eighth in lineal descent from the pioneer, Capt. Thomas Brooke, was born in Rutland, Worcester county, Mass., January 5, 1848, and came with his parents to this State in 1856. Here he spent his early life on the farm and attending the district schools and Oxford Academy, where he developed those native talents which distinguish the scholar. He gave special attention to medicine, which he expected to adopt as a profession and practice with his eldest brother, Edward, who was then a surgeon in the army. But the death of the latter in 1866 changed his plans, though he has never forgotten his love for medical science. In the winter of 1866-67 he taught school at Guilford, N. Y., and in the fall of 1867 resumed his studies at Norwich Academy, where he obtained a teacher's certificate, as he also had the preceding year at Oxford. The following winter, 1867-68, he taught the school at Rockwell's Mills in the town of Guilford, and in the spring of 1868 became a clerk in the First National Bank of New Berlin, N. Y., where in January, 1869, he was chosen teller, a position he filled with credit and satisfaction until he resigned in December, 1873. He was also a director in this bank during his last year there. In December, 1873, he accepted the appointment of teller of the National Albany Exchange Bank, of Albany, and on the death of its cashier, Theodore L. Scott, on February 22, 1881, succeeded him in that position, which he held until the bank was closed on the expiration of its charter in January, 1885. On the formation of the new National Exchange Bank of Albany (which succeeded the old institution),

in which he with Chauncey P. Williams, the president, took the active part, Mr. Brooks was elected the cashier, and discharged with fidelity the arduous duties of that office until November 6, 1889, when he was chosen a director and cashier of the Albany City National Bank, which positions he still holds. In December, 1889, he was also elected a trustee and treasurer of the Albany City Savings Institution, but subsequently resigned the treasurership. While cashier of the National Exchange Bank he was also a trustee in the Albany Exchange Savings Bank, but resigned this post November 6, 1889, to give his whole attention to the affairs of the two institutions with which he is now connected.

Mr. Brooks has always been a staunch Republican, has taken a deep interest in political affairs, and in 1886 was a delegate to the Republican State Convention at Saratoga. He was for two years treasurer of St. Peter's church and in January, 1890, was elected trustee and treasurer of the Corning Foundation for Christian Work in the Diocese of Albany, which positions he still holds. This organization, in which he has manifested deep interest, and of which Bishop Doane is the head, embraces the supervision and care of St. Agnes School, the Child's Hospital, St. Margaret's House, and the Sisters' House, and is one of the most worthy benevolent institutions in the State. Mr. Brooks was a foundation member of the Fort Orange Club in 1880, and has been a member of the Unconditional Republican Club of Albany since about 1875, being its treasurer during the Garfield campaign. He is fond of athletic sports and outdoor exercise, has won several prizes at the Rensselaerwyck Rifle Range, is an extensive reader on historical and scientific subjects, and is a close observer and student of human nature and natural scenery. He has devoted much time to genealogical research, and has in his possession copies of wills and settlements of estates of seven generations of his family in America.

Mr. Brooks was married on January 22, 1889, to Miss Frances S., daughter of the late Samuel Patten, of Albany, and Julia, daughter of William Newton. At the wedding were Mr. Brooks's parents, who three days before had celebrated their fifty-seventh marriage anniversary. They have had two children: Edward, who died in infancy, and Julia Newton Brooks, born July 10, 1893. Mr. and Mrs. Brooks have traveled quite extensively, both in this country and in Europe. In the winter of 1895 they were among the passengers who had a thrilling experience on board the ill-fated steamer Cienfuegos, which on February 4 was wrecked and lost off Harbor Island, one of the group of the West Indies.

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